



Kalamazoo Public Library

Public Policy: Materials Selection

General Statement of Purpose

The Materials Selection Policy of Kalamazoo Public Library guides the professional staff responsible for selection of materials and informs the public about the principles upon which the selection of library materials are based.

Free and Open Access

The Library and the Library Board of Trustees consider reading, listening, and viewing to be individual, private matters and believes that full, confidential, and unrestricted access to information is essential for all patrons to exercise their constitutional rights.

Underlying the Materials Selection Policy are the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read Statement, and the Freedom to View Statement. The Library, the Library Board, and Library personnel will not, either directly or indirectly, ban or censor any material. The presence of an item in the Library does not indicate any endorsement of its content by the Library.

The Board of Trustees recognizes that while individuals are free to reject for themselves materials of which they do not approve, they cannot restrict the freedom of others to read, listen, and view within any guideline set forth by the library.

Responsibility of Material Selection

The Kalamazoo Public Library Board of Trustees delegates the selection of library materials to the Kalamazoo Public Library Director and to members of the professional staff.

Criteria for Materials Selection

Use of materials, in all formats, is the most powerful influence on the Library's collection. Purchase of new titles and withdrawal of old materials are both influenced by current and historic circulation rates. In addition, number of holds placed, and patron requests are closely monitored and directly influence the purchase of additional copies of high demand titles.

In addition to these considerations, the library attempts to meet the community's present and future needs as it adds titles, considers emerging formats, and seeks to enrich the collection and maintain its overall balance.

No single criterion is applicable to all selection decisions. Some resources may be judged primarily for their artistic merit, scholarship, or value to humanity; others are chosen to satisfy the informational, recreational or educational interests of the community.

Librarians apply their judgment and experience in selecting materials according to the criteria listed below. Works of imagination are judged by different standards than are works of information and opinion. Materials are judged as a whole rather than on isolated portions. In considering individual titles in the selection process, librarians consult historic circulation data, along with reviews and other evaluative sources.

Kalamazoo Public Library selection criteria:

- Relevance to interests and needs of the community
- Anticipated demand or critical review and publicity
- Suitability of physical form for library use
- Local significance of the author or subject
- Relevance to the existing collection's strengths and weaknesses
- Current or historical significance of the author or subject
- Reputation and/or significance of the author/artist and publisher/producer
- Relevance to the experiences and contributions of diverse populations
- Price, availability in relation to Library materials budget

Special Considerations for Collection Areas

1. Children's and Teen Collections

The collections for children and teens provide materials for children from birth through high school, as well as for adults who care for and work with them. Librarians use their knowledge of children and teens in creating and maintaining these collections. The library does not limit children and teens to use of only materials in the children's and teen collections. Parents or guardians are responsible for materials chosen by children and teens.

2. Local History/Community Information

The library is committed to providing information for its patrons about the community and the state. It selectively acquires and provides access to relevant resources about Kalamazoo city and county, the southwest Michigan region, and the state in general. The library also provides basic historical and genealogical material about the areas from which Kalamazoo was predominantly settled.

Especially regarding works by local authors, materials in the local history collection may or may not meet selection criteria in other respects, the local interest taking precedence over other factors. The library also acquires instructional materials in the effective use of local history sources to assist patrons in the use of our collection and other regional history collections.

Since local information is not always available commercially, it is necessary to develop indexes and other tools in-house. Both current and historic entries are added to the library's Local Information Database to fill local needs, interests, and demand.

3. Digital Collections

Selection of digital content can vary among the vendors who supply digital content to the library. In instances where individual title selection is not available, selection of the service will be based upon the reputation and overall content offerings of the vendor.

4. Law Library Collection

In collaboration with the Kalamazoo County government, the library

provides legal resources for use by laypersons and legal professionals in the County. The collection is maintained in an effort to offer reliable information for individuals navigating the legal system and focuses on resources that deal with common legal issues in the areas of family, civil, and criminal law. It contains state, federal, and local laws, and includes both primary and secondary resources. Due to the changing nature of legal information, the best efforts are made to ensure that the law collection is kept current.

5. Government Information and Publications

The library holds federal, state, regional and local government materials. It collects federal depository publications selectively, adhering to the legal requirements and program regulations of the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP).

6. Federal agencies currently produce most new government publications in electronic format; hence the library's role is to empower patrons to access government information electronically. Print materials are selected when electronic sources do not provide adequate access to government information needed by library patrons.

7. Gifts

A gift to the library may consist of materials or funds for the purchase of materials. The library accepts restricted gift funds only if the material to be purchased has been jointly approved by the donor and the library. Gift additions must meet the same selection criteria as purchase materials and are accepted subject to the following limitations:

- a. The library retains full ownership of the gift
- b. The library makes the final decision on its own use or other disposition of the gift
- c. The library reserves the right to decide the conditions of display, housing, access, and retention

Collection Management

The Library's collections are a constantly changing entity. The collections are reviewed on an ongoing basis and materials are added and withdrawn frequently with an emphasis on contemporary popularity and an attempt to maintain the collections enduring value to the community. Collection management decisions are influenced by patterns of use, the physical capacity of each location, and the availability of like materials from other locations or other library systems.

Except for the transfer of discarded materials to other library collections or to the Friends of the Kalamazoo Public Library for their store and release of materials to recycling services, the library does not give or sell materials from its collections to individuals or organizations without the express permission of the Library Director.

Requests for Reconsideration of Library Materials

Should a member of the community question the selection or placement of a title in the collection, he or she is welcome to discuss their concerns with library staff. If those discussions do not satisfy the community member, a formal process for reconsideration will be followed.

Conclusion

The library acquires and provides access to new resources and formats as they are judged feasible, suitable, and relevant to the community.

Expanding areas of knowledge, technological advances, changing social values, and cultural differences require flexibility, open-mindedness, and responsiveness in the evaluation and re-evaluation of all library resources.

This revised Materials Selection Policy, as adopted by the District Library Board, will be reviewed by the Library Director, professional staff, and the Board of Trustees at least every five years.

Policy adopted: April 2, 1990.

Revisions adopted December 21, 1993; December 14, 1998; October 27, 2003; December 15, 2008; **February 24, 2014.**